

In the comic strip Calvin and Hobbes, Hobbes the tiger often blindsided Calvin. Hobbes would stalk Calvin and just when he least expected it, the tiger would pounce on him.

The lingering fear of the tiger stalking him impacted Calvin's behavior.

He would try to avoid his nemesis.

Unfortunately, no matter how hard he tried, the tiger would get him.

How does this relate to Civil Air Patrol and life?

The lesson we can learn from this is no matter how much Calvin worried and altered his activities, he could not avoid this problem.

While none of us regularly have to worry about tigers pouncing on us, we all face problems and some of them seem to come out of nowhere when we least expect it.

I prefer to consider my problems challenges. I know our wing will face many challenges in 2009.

· One challenge we face is tracking ELTs on 121.5 MHz when COSPAS-SARSAT stops monitoring them on 1 February. Meeting this challenge will require us to monitor vigilantly for signals on 121.5 MHz and to train our personnel and ensure they have excellent DF skills. The Emerald City ground team was challenged by this and it became an opportunity—they had three finds in one mission!

· Another challenge we will face is NIMS compliance. Many of our personnel failed to take the required ICS courses and as a result our ability to respond to missions has been impacted. Meeting this challenge will require us to ramp up our training efforts.

· As always, conducting activities and missions safely will challenge the wing.

· CAP members also face the challenge of meeting increasingly high standards for professionalism, training, and conduct.

I am confident we can overcome these challenges with a positive attitude, solid training, teamwork, and dedication. We will also need to focus on the Core Values and our three missions. We have many strengths, and challenges are not new to our membership. The important fact to remember is that for every challenge we face, we also have an opportunity to grow and/or learn new things. In their desire to serve their community, state and nation, members of CAP have been adapting and overcoming challenges since 1941.

Leaders often see more issues than others. When I say leaders, I do not mean just those individuals with a command position. Leaders are individuals who influence and/or direct the actions of others. Some lead from above like Col Tim Hansen and Lt Col John Schmidt, who are sharing DO duties for the wing and working hard to improve how we train statewide. It is also possible to lead up. Three cadets and a senior recently stepped forward and are leading up by serving on wing staff: C/1st Lt Sarah Wildman stepped up to serve as Internal Aerospace Officer, a position we struggled to fill. C/Capt Matt Simmonds stepped up to serve as ES Training Officer. Finally, C/Lt Col Mitch Edwards agreed to work in Public Affairs and assist in Cadet Programs. We appreciate their willingness to lead from the cadet ranks and to help the wing. The fourth person leading up is 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Todd Schooler who is joining the wing staff as the Assistant Safety Officer. Finally, one can lead across by influencing peers in a positive manner. I have seen so many members do this I cannot single out an individual for recognition. Remember, you do not need a title to be a leader.

It is important to understand that no matter how well we plan and prepare for what might happen, problems will still come out of nowhere and blindside us. We have to work hard to not let problems impact our attitude and ability to succeed. We need to be grateful for the things we have rather than focus on threats. Challenges are natural and they tend to make us stronger when we overcome them.

It is important for us to develop the vision that will help us see the paths around the obstacle and find the positive result.

Trying to avoid problems, like Calvin, leads to a miserable existence full of fear and worry.

Every problem has a solution and in time will be replaced by a new problem.

We cannot let fear of problems or fear of failure paralyze us.

Issues are unavoidable, so why not embrace our problems and take advantage of the opportunities they present?

Theodore Roosevelt had a quote that applies to CAP's steadfast volunteers.

Roosevelt said, "The credit belongs to those people who are actually in the arena . . . who know the great enthusiasms, the great devotions to a worthy cause; who at best, know the triumph of high achievement; and who, at worst, fail while daring greatly . . . so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat."

Kansas Wing has already seen some successes in 2009. First, we were the only wing in North Central Region to complete 100% of the Safety Surveys required by NHQ before 31 January.

Second, NHQ sent kudos for the number of AFROTC o-rides completed in Kansas Wing.

Finally, the Hays unit will be rechartering in February.

Lt Col Errol Wuertz and a dedicated core of new volunteers will help us expand our reach westward and better cover the state.

Success is a journey, not a destination.

One should expect some potholes during the journey.

Remember, bad news is preferable to no news in that information conveys important knowledge about the current reality. The wise stay apprised of current events and makes decisions based upon incoming information. At times those decisions can be painful such as suspending a unit or member, assessing a member, or refusing to back a friend who is making a bad decision.

Nonetheless, leaders will shoulder the load and do what must be done to move forward.

The race does not go to the swift but to those who keep running.

Realistically, we all have problems and it is impossible to avoid the challenges life sends our way.

Few lead a charmed, problem-free life and our experience in Civil Air Patrol is no exception.

I look forward to working with you to face the challenges we will overcome in 2009 and to celebrate our successes.